AMO

PROCEEDINGS OF SEMINAR ON THE MUNICIPAL ROLE IN THE PROVISION OF DAY CARE FOR CHILDREN

TORONTO, JUNE 14, 1984

THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO

84- 4674

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, a non-partisan voluntary organization, is united to promote the values of the municipal government system and the status of the municipal level of government as a vital and essential component of the total intergovernmental framework of Ontario and Canada.

The Association acts as the collective voice of Ontario's municipal governments and is organized to accomplish through cooperation and coordination, what the majority have neither the time nor the resources to do individually.

The Association represents some six hundred (600) municipal governments throughout Ontario. The governing body is composed of some eighty (80) municipal elected and appointed officials, who in turn represent a wide-range of municipal government interest.

The following sections and affiliated municipal professional associations form an important part of the Association's structure and therefore, play an important part in its activities in terms of the Board of Directors, program and policy development:

Association Sections:

* County and Regional Section
* Large Urban Section
* Northern Ontario Section (FONOM/NOMA)
* Rural (ROMA) Section
* Organization of Small Urban Municipalities Section

Association Affiliates:

* Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario
* Association of Municipal Tax Collectors of Ontario
* Municipal Engineers Association
* Ontario Municipal Administrators Association
* Ontario Municipal Personnel Association
* Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
* Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario

To the Municipal Clerk:

Please circulate this Report to the members of council and to the staff of your municipality. Additional copies are available at $2.50 each from the Publications Centre, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 100 University Avenue, Suite 902, Toronto, Ontario M5J 1V6

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

SEMINAR ON
THE MUNICIPAL ROLE IN
PROVIDING DAY CARE FOR CHILDREN

June 14, 1984
Constellation Hotel, Toronto

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, June 14, 1984, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario hosted a seminar on the municipal role in providing day care for children. The purpose of this seminar was to provide information on the way day care operates in municipalities across Ontario, and about the various issues facing different communities. It was intended that the seminar would provide a useful forum for discussion, and that the issues and recommendations arising from the seminar would be submitted to the AMO Health and Social Services Committee for review and assistance in developing an AMO position paper.

R.A. (Dick) Illingworth, Mayor, Town of Aurora, and a member of the AMO Health and Social Services Committee, served as Presiding Chairman for the seminar. The Keynote Speaker, Maureen McTeer, provided an overview on day care, and gave her views on its purpose and the role of governments in providing day care services. The program had planned for John Pierce, Provincial Day Care Co-ordinator, Ministry of Community and Social Services, to provide the Provincial perspective on funding and day care policies. However, at the last moment, Mr. Pierce was unable to attend, and nobody else from the Ministry was available at such short notice. There was a panel of municipal politicians, representing municipalities of various sizes, and with different perspectives on day care, and in the afternoon, a variety of topics was discussed in workshop groups.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Maureen McTeer began her comments by noting the Working Woman's Slogan:

> Be prepared for the challenges of a career
> Be prepared for the demands of a family
> Be prepared to collapse

This slogan was written on a T-shirt that Ms. McTeer received when she spoke recently in Hamilton on the changing role of women in the 1980's. Ms. McTeer felt that this slogan described the feelings of thousands of Canadian mothers in the paid labour force. Every mother who chooses or who must work in the paid labour force, regardless of age or background, whether clerical or senior management personnel, living in rural or urban areas, shares the common problem of child care. Seventy-two per cent of women in Ontario between the ages of 25 and 44 are in the paid labour force, and half of these are mothers with children under the age of three. The changing social and economic situations facing families have created the need to re-assess the philosophy and rules of child care.

Originally, child care was treated as a charity for destitute, divorced, or servant women. Since 1966, with the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), child care has been treated as a service to those in need or those likely to be in need. The Canada Assistance Plan has helped shape provincial policies and responses to child care needs.

Ms. McTeer expressed the view that there is growing acceptance that just as the nature of the family has changed over the last two decades, the needs and workings of the child care system must be reviewed and changed to meet changing needs and new expectations. Government, business, labour and parents are beginning to seek ways in which the child care system can better reflect the reality and needs of Canadian families in the 1980's and beyond. The Federal Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the Honourable Judy Erola, has established a Task Force on Child Care which is expected to report its findings to the Minister by the end of 1984. This Task Force may provide interested groups with an opportunity for input into future policy and legislation on child care reform in Canada.

Ms. McTeer believes that future day care policies should include the following principles:

1. That universal access by families of all income brackets to quality child care is a right, and not merely a privilege.

2. As an economic and social issue affecting all working parents, regardless of income level, child care must no longer be treated as a welfare problem.

3. Any comprehensive, universal system of quality child care services must be affordable and accessible to all working parents.

Some of the difficulties with the present approach is that middle class families must increasingly seek informal child care arrangements outside the day care system, because they cannot afford the cost. Informal arrangements, such as family, friends or neighbourhood babysitters, may be effective in some instances, but are unacceptable as an alternative to quality day care services run by trained personnel in a loving, consistent and professional environment. The present system deals only with those Canadians who are on welfare, or who have passed some form of income or needs test. Another problem is the continued need for more licenced spaces.

Ms. McTeer noted some of the ways to fund a universal child care program including the following:

1. To fund the system entirely by the government, using health and education as a model.

2. Creative use of the tax system.

3. To boost both the standards and funding to include informal care situations, used mostly by middle-income parents who fall just above the guideline for subsidy eligibility.

4. To put the emphasis on business, government and labour to create child care facilities on site.

In conclusion, Ms. McTeer stated that she believes universally accessible quality child care is a pre-requisite to economic equality for women, and an essential service to working parents in the '80's. Day care also provides a unique and important opportunity to foster a child's development.

Ms. McTeer answered a number of questions from delegates regarding different options of providing and funding day care and regarding the roles of the public, private and volunteer sectors. With respect to the municipal role in providing day care, Ms. McTeer suggested that municipalities interested in day care should be involved in discussions with the other levels of government. There was some discussion regarding the role of the education system in day care, and Ms. McTeer noted the need to recognize the specific physical and emotional needs of children under five years of age. Finally, Ms. McTeer pointed out that the issue of costs is one consideration, but should not be the determining factor alone. The issue for the government to decide first is whether day care is needed, and then it must determine how to meet the need.

MUNICIPAL ROLE IN PROVIDING DAY CARE

Speaker: **Patricia Bailey**, Deputy Reeve, Town of Wingham:

Patricia Bailey provided a perspective on day care from a rural municipality, and advised delegates of the particular issues facing the Town of Wingham. Wingham is concerned about the directive from the Ministry of Community and Social Services that all municipalities must set their fees for day care provided in their own directly operated programs to the actual cost by January 1, 1986. Middle income families will not be able to afford these fees, and members of the day care board are afraid that their centre will be forced to close. The Province had encouraged Wingham to build its new day care centre, and the centre is of major importance to the community.

Mrs. Bailey expressed the view that day care is crucial to working parents in rural communities. Funding for quality care is well spent, and the right to quality care in rural Ontario should be a government priority. Wingham has been corresponding with the Honourable Frank Drea, Minister of Community and Social Services, and joined the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care in its efforts to save its day care centre.

Speaker: **Anne Mulvale**, Councillor, Regional Municipality of Halton:

Anne Mulvale spoke on the experience of Halton in determining its role regarding day care services.

Halton became a Region in 1974 by combining 2 large urban areas, Oakville and Burlington, with the communities of Milton, Acton and Georgetown. The population is over a quarter of a million, and embraces virtually all social and economic backgrounds, urban and rural industries, commerce and lifestyles.

In the mid 1970's, Halton's elected representatives were very cautious about day care, and many believed that Halton did not have day care needs. A study was done in 1980 to determine public opinion in Halton regarding day care, and the conclusion reached by 70% of respondents was that Halton should respond to people "in need". The Province came through with some funding to help serve the waiting list, but funds were in short supply, even though the municipality was willing to contribute 20%. Marriage break-downs, economics, and the lower earnings of women, are factors which have contributed to the growing need for day care facilities.

Day care benefits the taxpayer as it assists social assistance recipients to enter the labour force. This social assistance recipient becomes a consumer with more money to spend, contributes to the employment of others, develops improved self-esteem, and becomes self-sufficient financially. Day care benefits industry and commerce as adequate day care lessens stress and absenteeism, and increases productivity.

Mrs. Mulvale expressed the view that the municipal role is to be part of the chain of service delivery, to stimulate and monitor the quality of care, and to work with the other levels of government and industry to respond adequately and in the most cost efficient manner to the needs identified in their communities.

Speaker: **June Rowlands,** Executive Alderman, City of Toronto:

June Rowlands stated that day care is a societal issue. If society wants children, then it must decide how to care for them.

As costs for day care increase, the middle class cannot afford it. The subsidized poor and the well-off class carry the burden. Families do not have to pay for health care, or for their children to be in school after the children are five years old; yet young parents must pay for day care in the crucial time when their children are under 5 years of age, at a time in their lives when they are least able to afford such costs.

If society wants mothers to stay home, then we need to help them do this. If society wants mothers to work, then society needs to help. Most women need to work because of the high cost of living.

The City of Toronto has agreed to subsidize the salaries of day care workers to help keep day care affordable. The Federal Government should provide tax incentives to encourage employers to provide day care in the workplace.

Speaker: **Delmar Smythe,** Alderman, City of Stratford:

Delmar Smythe discussed the specific issues facing the City of Stratford with respect to day care. Stratford has a population of 27,000, and has had two municipally operated day care centres since 1974 (Avondale and Anne Hathaway). He believes there are several advantages to day care centres. Parents are at ease in leaving their children at a centre as they believe it is a safe environment and their children will receive quality care. For children, day care centres offer a learning experience where they can learn respect for authority, property and other children, how to co-operate with others, and how to communicate with other children as well as with adults.

In 1981-82, the Romeo Day Care Centre was built with funds made available through the Community Services Contribution Program (CSCP). The Avondale Centre moved to the new centre from its previous location in a local church. The Romeo Day Care Centre commenced operation in February, 1982; however, during 1982-83, the Centre was faced with problems posed by the directive from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to move by January 1986 to end "indirect subsidy" and charge parents the full costs of day care. As rates were increased, the centre lost children, until October 14, 1983, when the Romeo Day Care Centre was closed.

The issue facing Stratford is whether municipal day care is being priced out of existence. It is doubtful whether parents will be able to afford the full per diem costs required by 1986. In addition, as fees increase, enrollment decreases and as enrollment decreases, the per diem costs increase.

Mr. Smythe expressed the feeling that the situation in Stratford regarding day care is a real shame. The municipality is responsible for a program controlled by the Provincial and Federal Governments. Because of the funding limitations, the municipality may conclude that municipally operated day care is not worth the risk. Stratford had very good programs since 1974, and Council never complained about its 20% share. Now these programs are "down the drain" when the gap in subsidy needs is so small.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

1. **Impact of Provincial standards and guidelines on municipal day care centres and private day care centres**

   Leader: **Deborah Oakley**, Director of Social Services, Regional Municipality of Halton
   Recorder: **Brenda Van Veen**, Head of Day Care Programmes, Regional Municipality of Waterloo

   Clarification of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) - questions raised in morning session

   The Canada Assistance Plan is the federal legislation which allows cost-sharing for the provision of services to those in need or likely to become in need. A full discussion of CAP is contained in the report "Municipal Role in Subsidized Day Care - Some Current Issues" prepared for the Day Care Committee of the Ontario Municipal Social

Services Association (OMSSA) by the Metropolitan Toronto Community Services Department, May, 1984 (copies available through OMSSA) and had been distributed to all registrants.

The Province of Ontario elected to use the assistance approach rather than the welfare service approach as the means of determining financial need for day care subsidy. The assistance approach requires needs-testing of families. Municipalities could take more advantage of this method by increasing the ceilings they set in place on expenditure items, such as rent, and by using the full income exemption allowed (i.e. twenty-five percent). This would result in more families becoming eligible for either full or partial subsidies. Consequently, the Province would be in a position to receive more dollars under the cost-sharing terms of CAP.

Impact of Changes to Standards

The comment was made that raising standards and quality result in higher costs. The Province indicated that there were no cost implications for these new standards. However, some service providers were experiencing increased costs as a result of such changes in standards for staff/child ratios and group sizes. Other service providers would be in a position to reduce costs as a result of the new standards (e.g. now only one teacher is needed for every 15 school age children).

There was a concern expressed that more parents will be forced into using an informal babysitting arrangement because of the escalating fees charged in day care centres. Therefore, it is important that municipalities attempt to operate their centres in a cost-effective manner within the standards set by the Province. The standards are seen as building a climate for quality care for children.

With respect to the above, the participants of this workshop wished to make the following statement of principle. **A SOCIETY WHICH VALUES ITS CHILDREN WILL SET HIGH STANDARDS FOR THEIR CARE.** Our concern therefore is not so much with the standards but that the changes announcing enforcement of existing rules relating to cost-sharing by the Province, for 1986, will make it impossible for many parents to have access to high quality care for their children.

It is especially important that the Province be asked to give special consideration to smaller municipalities where the only day care centre is municipally operated. If these centres are forced to close because

of the Province's changes in funding for 1986, parents in those communities will not have the option of sending their child to a privately operated centre. The parents will be forced to use informal baby-sitting arrangements or retire from the workforce in order to care for their own children.

The Province should be asked to share its long range plans for day care.

Per Diems

A number of municipalities still have not received written information outlining methodologies for calculating a per diem rate which reflects the actual costs of operation. The information that has been received verbally changes over time and is contradictory from one municipality to another. In light of the fact that it is less than a year and half before 'actual per diems' are to be in place, the Province should be disseminating clear guidelines, in writing, to all municipalities so that appropriate planning can take place.

The lack of clarity on the part of the Province is exemplified by the confusion surrounding the Provincial policy concerning indirect subsidization and the charging of actual fees. The following may help to clarify the Province's position. The Day Nurseries Act regulation in question stipulates that the Province will only cost-share expenditures on behalf of those eligible for day care subsidy as indicated by a needs test. The Province will no longer be cost-sharing the difference between fees charged to those not eligible for subsidy and the actual cost. There are no regulations which require a municipality to charge 'actual fees' to non-subsidized clients in 1986. The Day Nurseries Act does not prohibit a municipality from continuing to indirectly subsidize fees for middle class taxpayers as is currently the situation in all municipalities where the fee charged is less than the actual cost. It is just that the province will not cost-share the expenses of services for families not eligible under CAP.

The reason offered by Provincial staff for changing funding methods is because of their need to meet the requirements for funding from the Federal Government under CAP. This funding arrangement does not limit the number of subsidized spaces available. Nor does it prohibit the Province from continuing to financially support municipal centres by such methods as direct grants. The Province could also attempt to re-negotiate its position with the Federal Government under CAP.

In conclusion, the participants of this workshop made the following recommendation which they hoped would be adopted as a resolution of AMO:

> That AMO approach the Province of Ontario to provide sufficient funding to allow municipalities to continue to offer quality day care for children as required under the Province's standards and to this end, the requirement to eliminate indirect subsidization be postponed beyond 1986, preferably, indefinitely.

2. General Philosophy of Day Care

Leader: **Dick Illingworth**, Mayor, Town of Aurora
Recorder: **Marna Ramsden**, Director, Children's Services Division, Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto

Introduction

This session attracted a broad cross section of the AMO workshop participants. Both elected officials and municipal staff were represented. The group also attracted representatives of community based day care special interest groups. All regions of the Province were represented; participants included staff from both large and small municipalities.

The group reached a quick consensus that establishing a philosophical framework was advantageous to any discussion of day care issues, problems or future directions.

However, having agreed that sound philosophical underpinnings would provide a stable foundation on which to negotiate with the Province, diverging opinions of what that philosophy should be began to emerge.

Who is the Client?

The group first grappled with an appropriate focus for day care. Some felt strongly that the child's interests should be paramount ... that without children, there would be no need for day care. The issue that surfaced quickly, when children were seen as the primary target, concerned program quality. The discussion then highlighted

a sub-category of children deserving even more attention ... children with special needs. This group includes children at risk of neglect or abuse, and developmentally and physically handicapped children.

An equally large section of the group focused on the parent as the primary target group to be served. It was pointed out that all the social and financial eligibility criteria used to assess clients pertain to the parents' circumstances. Various sub-groups of parents were specifically mentioned as having service priority. These included: sole support parents, working parents, parents in receipt of social assistance who wish to become gainfully employed and parents who themselves have special needs (physical, emotional mental disability). The main issue discussed by those who identified parents as the primary service target was choice. Most felt that a range of service options should be available to allow the parent to exercise his or her right of choice and to make a responsible decision concerning the best child care arrangement for his/her child.

Some members of the group felt that is was impossible to highlight either the parent or the child to the exclusion of the other. These people suggested that day care should be viewed as a service to families. In this way the needs of both the parent and the child could be recognized.

A fourth opinion registered in the group discussion was that day care should be viewed as a beneficial service to the community or society. This position saw children as a precious natural resource to be nurtured and safeguarded through a family's voluntary participation in day care.

Purpose/Objectives of Day Care

Having reached no clear consensus of who is the client of day care, the group attempted to clarify the underlying purpose or main objective of day care. Predictably this discussion was influenced by participants' positions on the "who is the client" issue.

Those who felt the child is the client saw day care as an educational developmental program which can also be used to remediate or therapeutically intervene in the case of a special needs child. Those who espoused this position also viewed day care as a primary prevention aid program which also facilitates early diagnosis/recognition of a problem.

Workshop participants who had highlighted the parent as the primary client described day care as a parent support program, and an income maintenance service.

Most agreed, following the discussion, that day care served a multiplicity of purposes.

Conclusion

The quality of the discussion and the range of opinions expressed demonstrated that there was a clear group consensus that day care is an important service for a variety of reasons. There was clear agreement that currently there simply is not enough subsidized day care to meet the demonstrated need/demand.

The group supported, as a first step, pursuing an adequate supply of subsidized day care to meet the needs of clients who are eligible to receive it.

3. **Role of the Municipality in Providing Day Care**

Leader: **Ron Book**, Councillor, Regional Municipality of Niagara
Recorder: **Kitty Francis**, Administrator, Department of Social Services, County of Brant

Should municipalities be involved in providing day care, and if so, should the responsibility rest at the local or regional level?

Members of the workshop agreed that there is a definite role for municipalities in the provision of day care. Municipalities need to take a leading role in provision of day care and also need to encourage a wide mix of day care in their communities. In some areas of the Province, there is no day care provided at all and there is seen to be a need for the Province to take a leadership role in assisting those municipalities to provide day care services.

There is a need to see day care as a community issue and concern and not solely a woman's issue and concern. Therefore, there is a need for all citizens in the community to take an active role in ensuring that there is adequate day care provided within communities.

The need to ensure that day care is available is seen as an extremely important issue in that what happens to children in the first five years is extremely critical in terms of their lives. This means that the status of day care needs to be increased and the recognition of it as an important issue needs to be ensured.

The level of government which has authority and responsibility for the provision of social services, whether that be a city unit, county unit, city/county unit, or regional government, is the one which has the responsibility for the provision of day care. In areas which are unconsolidated, there is again a role for the Provincial Government to try and ensure that day care is provided in these areas by working with the local governments.

What client groups should be served by municipalities?

Members of the workshop agreed that when looking at the whole question of availability of day care and the accessibility of day care, one must be clear in terms of whether one is considering universal day care which is available to everyone at no cost, versus universal access to affordable day care which means that good day care services are available at a cost which people can afford, but are not necessarily there for everyone at no cost.

It was agreed that municipalities are the point at which priorities should be set for client groups who should have day care available to them. Those client groups which were identified as most needing in terms of day care services provided by municipalities are sole support parents where the provision of day care allows them to enter the paid labour market and/or upgrading and training courses; children with special needs such as developmental delays and behavioural problems; two parent families where both parents are in the paid labour market where their incomes are not such that they can afford good day care.

It was agreed by the workshop participants that good quality day care is not marketable and the costs of providing it are such that costs are more than the market can bear.

Therefore, the Provincial Government needs to look at alternate funding arrangements for day care services. These could involve grants to profit and non-profit programs and to municipalities. The salaries paid to early childhood education teachers are extremely low and do not reflect their professional status and level of service provided by them.

What are the relative merits of providing day care by purchase of service versus the municipality owning and operating its own centres?

It was agreed that there is a need for a good mix of day care programs to be available in communities. These programs should be provided by a variety of groups either profit, non-profit, or volunteer, as well as by municipalities. Municipal centres set a necessary example and standard which acts as a model for other centres in the community and across the Province. Some participants felt that some private centres are operated more for the profit motive than in the best interest of the child. The range of day care services which ought to be available in a community, provided by a wide variety of operators are: full day care programs; nursery school programs; shift programs; workplace day care; private home day care, whether municipally-run or privately-run; purchase of service and municipally operated. There definitely needs to be a choice for parents and their children in terms of types of care available.

We need to ensure that the Province is aware of what is happening in the field of day care across the Province. If the municipal centres are forced to go to actual cost charged to full fee-paying parents (those who are not eligible for subsidy), then municipal centres may have to close. In such a market, the private centres may begin to charge more so that the actual costs of provision of day care to municipalities, under purchase of service agreements, may be as high as the cost of the full cost in municipal centres. The total day care costs will then increase to municipal and provincial governments. There does not appear to be very much profit in private day care programs. The Province does not pick up deficits for private centres. The Province, perhaps, needs to be looking at the possibility of providing grants or other support for private day care programs in order to ensure a variety of day care programs available to parents and their children.

The Province also needs to ensure that its inspections of private and non-profit centres are done on a regular basis in order to ensure that standards and regulations are being adhered to.

As there are examples of sole support parents trying to further their education and training and/or seeking employment for whom there is no subsidized day care available because of the restrictions of funding by the Provincial Government, the Province must ensure co-ordinated planning so that the day care dollars and spaces are available for parents taking part in programs to assist them in getting off social assistance, e.g. the employment support initiatives, upgrading programs and other educational programs.

What is the municipal role regarding zoning for private home day care?

If there appears to be a problem in terms of the zoning for private home day care in some municipalities, then the municipality should be involved in trying to ensure that the zoning is changed to allow private home day care.

Should municipalities compete with the private sector?

As there is a need for a balance and mix of day care programs within our community, there is a role for both the private and the public sector in the day care field. As stated earlier, because it is questionable whether good quality regulated day care is marketable, the Province needs to be looking at the possibility of providing some kind of support for day care programs which are privately-run.

Should municipalities set an example for providing quality care?

Members of the workshop agreed that municipalities have a definite role in providing model services for a community. Municipalities have set the pace for integrated centres which provide day care for developmentally-delayed children and children with behaviour problems.

Because municipal centres tend to be unionized, they have also set an example of slightly more adequate salaries for early childhood educators. However, even in municipal centres, salaries for day care teachers are low, given their qualifications and the expectations placed upon them.

4. Options to Municipal Day Care

Leader: **Diane Hamre**, Councillor, Town of Newcastle
Recorder: **Karen Chan**, Manager of Children's Services, Regional Municipality of Halton

Work Place Day Care

NOTE: Work place day care refers to the provision of day care in the place of work

A representative on the task force for Work Place Day Care for the City of Toronto explained the task force and its mandate. The representative explained that they had been in existence for two years,

that their mandate was to try to establish new work place day cares, that they provided technical assistance for the development of the day care, and that they would set up a parent/employee committee to help organize the day care. There was some discussion around why more companies would not take advantage of this option. The question was raised regarding the possibility of employers indirectly subsidizing the day care program and how that would affect both Provincial and Federal legislation. In conclusion, there was general support of the concept of work place day care and support of the initiatives of the City of Toronto task force.

Boards of Education

The group moved on to discuss the role of the boards of education in providing day care. There was an initial general feeling that the boards of education should be a part of day care particularly with school aged children. There was a discussion about the uneasiness of the boards that day care will become their responsibility and that the community should be aware of this fear and respond to the fear. There was a general feeling that the boards should participate as far as co-operation for space, and members volunteered that in many areas this was already happening. There was also support for the concept of parenting education being tied into the day care program. A representative from Scarborough explained that that municipality had a task force in place to look at the role of the school boards and a representative from Ottawa explained that the boards of education had established some day care through continuing education. The City of York has also put some dollars forward through continuing education. There was a general feeling that the boards should participate in day care through co-operation of space and that, through this, possibly lower per diems could be established.

Informal Care

The next topic of discussion was informal care. The concern that there is not a comprehensive program plan province-wide was established. It appears that at this time there is not a plan to ensure that various options of care are available province-wide. There was not a consensus in the group around this topic but the pros and cons were discussed thoroughly. It appeared to the group that part of the problem in coming to a clear decision was establishing who was the client - the child or the parent. When the people who were dealing with the parents as the client spoke, they had no trouble ration-

alizing the informal care process because the parent was the client. When the people who were dealing with the child as a client spoke, they had some trouble accepting carte blanche the informal care process because, in fact, the client is the child. The pros and cons are as follows:

Pros

- Parental choice
- Leave options open
- Babysitting for after hours, or late hours or shift work
- Cost is cheaper
- Can serve more clients
- More flexibility in service
- More alternatives for various options or different kinds of programs

Cons

- The choice is not really there because of the money that is allocated per child
- Concern over safety
- Concern over where the money is being spent
- Concern over regulating the child care
- Concern over liability
- There is a contradiction between the new standards that are in place and the informal day care where no standards are in place from a Provincial point of view
- Public dollars should not be going towards care where standards are not set

There was no conclusion drawn by the group other than to establish that people's opinions were based on the perspective of the person looking at the issue. The overall message that came from the group was that there was a need for a comprehensive plan and commitment to sufficient spaces of quality care to meet the needs of the parents and children.

WRAP-UP

During the wrap-up session of the seminar, the following two resolutions were adopted:

1. That AMO pursue with the Provincial Government a policy that will ensure the provision of good quality day care for children who need it;

Further, that financial assistance for day care be available for families who are eligible;

Further, that AMO sponsor a seminar in the Fall of 1984 to report on the progress of these initiatives.

2. That AMO approach the Province of Ontario to provide sufficient funding to allow municipalities to continue to offer quality day care for children as required under the Province's standards and to this end, the requirement to eliminate indirect subsidization be postponed beyond 1986, preferably, indefinitely.

It was further agreed that AMO should express its disappointment that no representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services attended the seminar.

The point was expressed on behalf of private day care operators that they are also facing financial difficulties. Municipalities have a responsibility to private day care centres because citizens in the community are served by non-municipal centres, and this option should be continued.

Finally, delegates expressed support for AMO in hosting seminars on social services issues, and agreed that these types of seminars should be continued.

AMO

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Suite 902 • 100 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5J 1V6 • Telephone 593-1441

MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants in the AMO Seminar on the Municipal Role in the Provision of Day Care for Children

FROM: Ron Eddy, Reeve, Township of South Dumfries, and President of AMO

RE: Proceedings from Seminar

Please find enclosed the proceedings from the Day Care Seminar held in Toronto on June 14th.

Also attached are the resolutions concerning day care adopted at AMO's 1984 Annual Conference.

If you have any questions or wish additional information, please contact Beverley Allen or Deirdre Gibson at the AMO offices.

1984 09 05

ENCL.

Resolutions
on
Day Care for Children

Adopted at 1983 &1984 AMO Annual Meetings

PROVISIONS TO ENSURE GOOD QUALITY DAY CARE (1984)

Be it resolved that AMO pursue with the Provincial Government a policy that will ensure the provision of good quality day care for children who need it; and

Further that financial assistance for day care be available for families who are eligible; and

Further that AMO approach the Province of Ontario to provide sufficient funding to allow municipalities to continue to offer quality day care for children as required under the Province's standards and to this end, the requirement to eliminate indirect subsidization be postponed beyond 1986; and

Further be it resolved that AMO sponsor a seminar in the fall of 1984 to report on the progress of these initiatives.

REQUEST FOR THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO TO LIFT THE BUDGET RESTRAINTS ON MUNICIPAL DAY CARE PROGRAMMES (1984)

Whereas in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, it has been demonstrated that:

1. The cost of providing general welfare assistance for one parent with a pre-schooler for 1983 was approximately $7,400. and for one parent with both a pre-schooler and a school-age child was approximately $8,400.

2. The cost of providing family benefits assistance for one parent with a pre-schooler for 1983 was approximately $8,400. and for one parent with both a pre-schooler and a school-age child was approximately $9,500.

3. The cost of providing day care for the same children for 1983, if the parent had been in the work force, would have been approximately $2,800. for one pre-schooler in purchase of service and approximately $6,000. for a pre-schooler in a regional centre and a school-age child in home day care, a savings to the taxpayer of approximately $4,600. (GWA) and $5,600. (FBA) for both a pre-schooler and a school-age child; and

Whereas it may be the choice and preference of the parent to be in the work force or to acquire the necessary training to do so in order to become independent of social assistance and in order that her/his children may benefit by their increased financial stability; and

Whereas the self-esteem and sense of worth of the parent may be raised as a result of joining the work force and becoming free of demoralization and stigmatization which some associate with receiving government assistance;

Therefore be it resolved that the Province lift the budget restraints on municipal day care programmes so that all recipients of social assistance who prefer employment or retraining have the access to subsidized day care programmes.

REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN DAY CARE SPACES (1984)

Whereas despite recently announced increases in day care spaces, there remains well-documented need; and

Whereas changing social trends are contributing to increased demands for subsidized day care; and

Whereas the number of people on waiting lists for subsidized day care is increasing; and

Whereas some clients are not able to retrain or work without subsidized day care;

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of Ontario be encouraged to recognize the actual need for subsidized day care and make a commitment to gradual increases in funding to meet this need.

PROPOSALS TO SUBSIDIZE THE PER DIEM COSTS FOR DAY CARE SERVICES (1983)

Whereas the cost of providing day care services is increasing; and

Whereas there is apparently a proposal by the Ministry to subsidize the two parent working family by approximately 50% of the per diem cost; and

Whereas the Government allows a portion of the cost of day care to be deducted from income tax up to an amount of $1,000 per child to a maximum of $4,000 per family, so that, in effect, those who can best afford it are being further subsidized by

such reduction in income tax at a further cost to the rest of the taxpayers;

Therefore be it resolved that the Association is strongly in favour of charging the full amount of the per diem costs for day care where there is ability to pay such full amount and that per diem costs be charged on a sliding scale where there is established a need to pro rata subsidize a portion of the full amount.